

# THE PLACE'S LAST SUNDAY OF EARTH.

## SADLY WAITING FOR HER RELEASE.

Peter Garretton, Who Alone Tried to Save Her, Sees the Doomed Woman at Sing Sing—How the Last of the Miserable Business Will Be Accomplished.

In a few more hours the Martha Place will be at Sing Sing, which Governor Roosevelt prepared, and then tried to keep secret, will be over.

The miserable gray-haired woman, who will be killed by an electric bolt on Tuesday—it may be earlier—is praying, weeping, trembling as she waits for the word of death.

The people of New York, and indeed of the nation—for the whole of the United States has taken an interest in this case—have realized only in a measure what will happen when the woman is put to death. Her story will be told. It will be told notwithstanding the usages of Governor Roosevelt. It would have been told if Governor Roosevelt had had no single man there to see her die and had decided to touch at his desk in Albany the button which will send the old woman to eternity.

It is not permitted that such a horror in this year 1899 should go without publicity. It will be known so well that never again in this country will any one dare put a woman to death.

And so the people might as well be prepared for what they shall see in their midst's eyes. The ghastly thing will be done after this fashion:

**Will Know Her Day of Doom.** Mrs. Place will open her eyes on the dawn and will know that at least her vision rests upon the last of her days. She will continue to pray. She may be as stoical as an Indian, whom she so resembles in impassibility, in cruelty, in features. She may meet her death with the same stoic courage that gave her impulse to murder.

The Warden will enter a room wherein a tall, thin, angular, large boned woman. She will be dressed in black. There will be a narrow white collar about her neck. Her thin lips will be tightly compressed.

Not since her child was torn from her bosom by the hand of poverty has she smiled with the happiness that other women know. Whatever her wickedness she has been a most unfortunate woman. Fate has cut and tortured her. Her first born and only child taken from her, she sought happiness in marriage. Not there was the boon to be got. Everywhere she turned she found a blank wall where she expected a man. She has been wedded in with unfeeling, with scorn, with unfeelingness.

And she thought she was striking back at fate when she strangled her pretty stepdaughter; when she snatched her husband from her life by treachery will begin, and the final curtain will rise with the electric chair in the background.

Guards will enter her room and tell her to rise. They will ask her to take their hands. She may have strength enough to walk alone. She wants to have, it is probable that she has.

She will go down dark corridors, and if ever she glances up at a human face it will be of a smiling faraway. She will catch a glimpse of a long corridor, where hundreds of tiny tombs daily enclose the bodies of living men; and many will sigh as she goes to her death and envy her.

**Into the Dead House.** The old woman will pass into the Dead House. The law shows an irony of mercy by allowing a gradual entrance into the presence of death. She will pause in an outer room. She will hear the sound of voices in the next room.

In this ante-chamber of death she will see certain in one end of the room. She will not know what they screen. But there are condemned men there, who will not be permitted to see one who leads where they are bound to follow.

The iron doors leading to the place whence she has heard voices will open slowly and then she will catch a glimpse of the thing which is to slay her. Once within the cell which will look upon a box, in front of which is a three-legged chair, with strange wheels, and straps dangling from it. She will see that there she must sit and be killed.

The wretched old woman will behold, ranged along the walls of the room, a small company of men; one of them may be the judge who condemned her to death; one may be the solicitor whose ready tongue exposed her guilt to the world and brought her where she stands; she will see gray-haired men with glasses on their noses, and men of science; she will see seven ruddy, bulky men, in uniform. They are the deputies to the warden.

When there will be a miscellaneous whose business she cannot guess. They are the citizens which the law requires to be asked questions who have come from the room of atrocity and be one of a handful who may stay.

She saw an old woman shocked, burned to death by electricity.

If she could but note all the faces there she could observe the neck veins of half the men who come to the room. She would see the vibrations of their hearts and could observe that many a white hand trembled in the heavy hand calls. For it is always true that the spectators' emotions are as violent on such occasions as those of the victim himself, such is the beauty and strength of human sympathy.

**Women Would Be There.** There will be something very unusual in this affair. Two women will stand in the Chamber of Death. One will be a physician, who has been selected by the warden; the other will be a woman attendant.

It is impossible to give the names of these women. The Warden has said that he knows both the women have the requisite nerve for the ordeal. But a woman at an electric murder is an uncertain quantity. Perhaps Governor Roosevelt did not know that when his great heart and unswerving consideration suggested that two women be witnesses to the atrocity. They may be borne out fainting. But, on the other hand—such is woman—may be the bravest and calmest persons there.

Those who had been in the room before Mrs. Place came into the door observed a sign on the wall back of the chair, which said:

"Visitors must not touch the straps or the chair."

Warden Sage will have already been in the room. He will have called the attention of the spectators to a test of the machinery. This consists in passing the current through twenty incandescent lights. If the lights glow brightly, then the current is strong enough to kill the condemned man. And the men of science, as they see the lights glow, will ponder on the marvelous verities of electricity—which carries the capacity of death along with its mysterious blessing.

Then men and the two women will see the doors open upon which Mrs. Place's eyes had been fixed slowly, silently and fearfully, and the procession enter. Rev. Dr. Cole, an elderly and venerable-looking man, will have joined the old woman, and he will be reading from the Bible.

**Hurried to Her Death.** The old woman will be pushed quickly to the chair. Once with the full instru-

ment before her, she will be quickly hurried to her end.

She will sit in the chair, looking straight ahead, the motions and postures of the attendants will be quick and noiseless. The woman will kneel at the old woman's feet with a contrivance of steel, leather and sponge in her hand. She will thrust the black skirt aside and fix the thing on the right leg of the gray-haired convict. While she is doing that a man will deftly unroll her hair to find a spot on the crown of her head already made bare by the scissors.

And he will fix another instrument there like the one which was in the hands of the woman.

On the arms of the chair are two heavy straps. The one which is over the woman's thin arms and the clawlike hands spread out upon the rests. A black cap will be adjusted over her features; longer than those which had been used on men for this is a woman that is to be killed. Another strap will be brought from the back of the chair across her nose and across her cheeks, leaving an aperture through which she may breathe a few seconds longer.

To do all this will have taken less time than the telling here. The old woman will be waiting for some other adjustment, when suddenly the onlookers will behold her fingers fly to clenching, her emaciated arms strain at the leather straps, her wide-eyed neck distend, her frame writhe. The instant when her finger first moves the head looking at an inch, John beam will mark the beginning of death's work.

The onlookers will be requested to stand where they are until word is given by the Warden. Then they will be able to forget it.

**Perhaps Not Dead.** Then doctors will put their ears to the chest of the woman. They may not find her dead. They may shake their heads at the Warden; and again there may come that twisting convulsion.

So will die Martha Place, the first and last woman to be killed by electricity for violating law.

There has come in a vague way to Martha Place since she was told that she must prepare to die. By its vagueness it is more terrible. It has kept her eyes open, and she has seen the first moment when she must die. She has seemed to sleep; she has had her eyes closed, but she has seen the first moment when she must die. She has seemed to sleep; she has had her eyes closed, but she has seen the first moment when she must die.

With the imagination that is a woman's she has dreamed a thousand times.

Her face is fast assuming the pallor which death will shortly cast upon it. Throughout the day she interrupted her prayers with fits of weeping.

Almost as soon as she lies through with breakfast each day she begins to ask for Mrs. Sage, the Warden's wife, whose ministrations to the doomed woman have been the only comfort she has known. She does not come, and weeps again when she has gone. She begs Mrs. Sage to remain with her.

With this good prison angel, of all those near the grim old prison she has suffered most. At times the Warden has been anxious about her, fearing that the strain of the miserable business is finished it will be a great relief to the Warden and all his family.

Sage always leaves the prison at the time of an execution, and she will not be found at Sing Sing after to-morrow until the next morning.

Mrs. Place's most frequent attitude is to sit looking upon the floor, with her hands clasped in her lap. All occupation for her has been taken away in the fear of possible suicide.

Of course, a woman is always with Mrs. Place. She is a night nurse, a woman, who never takes eyes off her charge. Outside the door are always the two guards. Their vigilance is increasing, notwithstanding they have heard of Mrs. Place that she will go to the chair and will make no attempt upon her life.

Yet it is the rule, for it is the beginning of the death watch, practically the death watch itself.

**Her Brother Sees Her.** Mrs. Place had one visitor yesterday. It occasioned the most touching scene which has been enacted in connection with the dooming of the woman of Peter Garretton, her brother, who lives in New Brunswick, N. J., visited the prison. He was taken by Warden Sage to Mrs. Place's room, where he remained for more than an hour. Peter Garretton has remained faithful to his sister, notwithstanding his horror at the atrocity of the crime which she committed. It was he who hired the lawyers when all other relatives were drifting away. It was he who has done whatever lay in his power both to liberate Mrs. Place and to make her last moments tolerable.

Brother and sister met each other without demonstration. They looked silently into each other's eyes for a few minutes and then sat side by side and talked to each other in a low voice. During this talk Mrs. Place broke down and wept several times, and the brother soothed her tenderly.

The meeting between them was to argue the few details which must be attended to as an aftermath of her death. Mrs. Place has two small bank accounts. Her lawyers must be paid the balance that is due them. She has made suggestions about her own funeral, which will be faithfully carried out by the brother, and her personal effects will be distributed as she directs.

**Preparing the Machinery.** State Electrician Davis was at work yesterday upon the dynamo and the other electrical machinery which is used in conferring the death penalty. Mr. Davis is not the man who personally shoots the killing fluid into the bodies of the condemned convicts. The actual release of the current is left to a convict who is brought willingly to the death chamber, and who, by a gesture of deception is allowed to switch the current without knowing it.

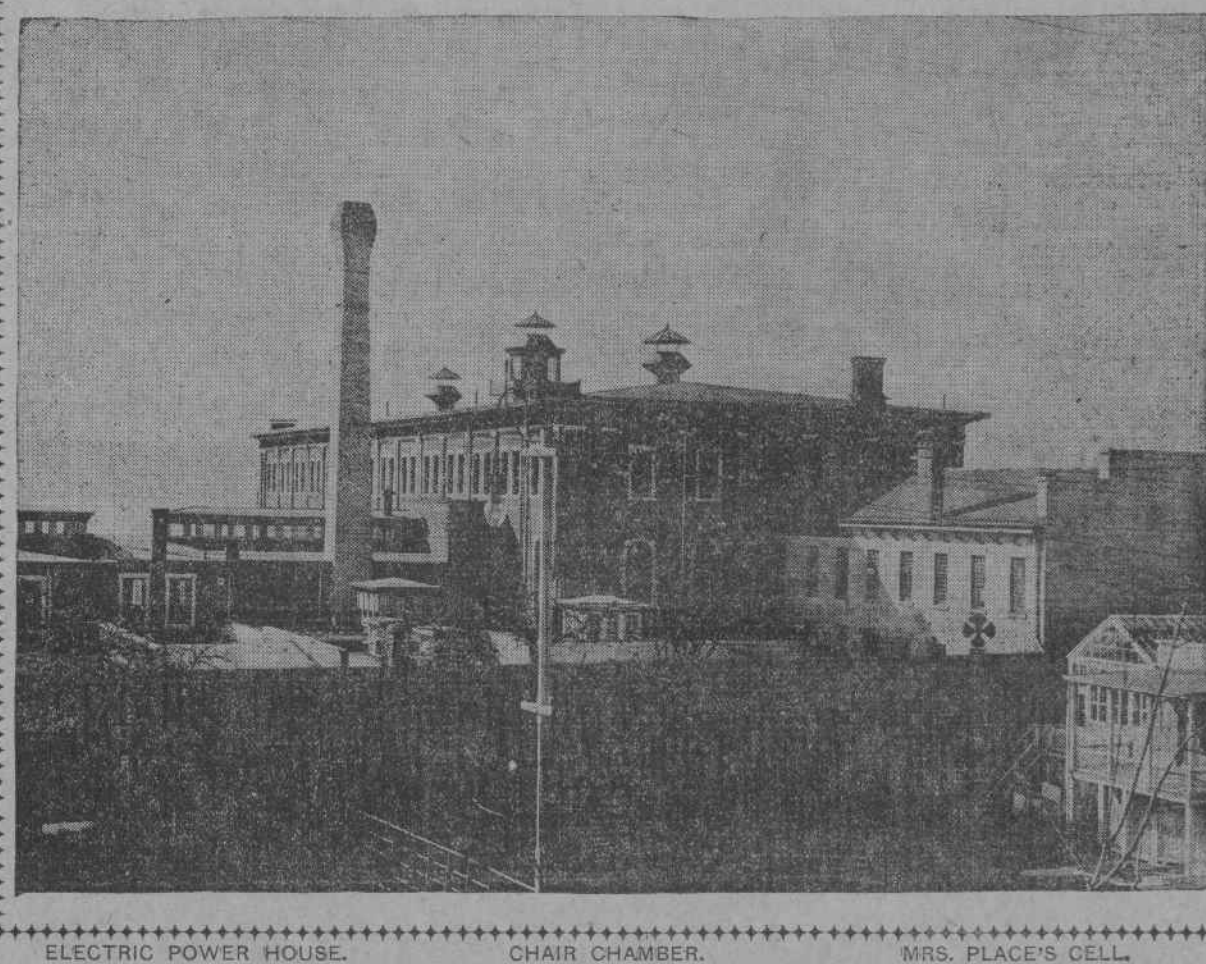
The invitations to the witnesses of the electrocution have reached the persons to whom they have been directed. They bear the hour and date of the execution. All the invitations have been marked "confidential," and all those whom the law invites are keeping their mouths closed concerning it.

Not even the Associated Press, which serves many papers, and which will have a representative present at the infliction of the death penalty will reveal to its newspapers the time of the electrocution.

Unless Warden Sage changes his plans, about which he has divulged nothing, the electrocution will take place on Tuesday morning.

But the week in which the execution must take place begins on Sunday night at midnight; and with proper warnings by telegraph Warden Sage can have the witnesses there even on Monday.

The Warden steadfastly refuses to give out any information concerning the details of the execution.



Here is Where Mrs. Place Will Be Killed Next Tuesday. The Maltese cross shows where Mrs. Place is now confined. The location of the electric power house is shown by the tall smokestack; the house containing the chair of death is shown by the little cupola just over the wall.

## NO WOMAN SHOULD BE PUT TO DEATH.

The Journal is in receipt of hundreds of letters bearing on the Place case. Here are a few:

To the Editor of the Journal:

In reading last night's Journal and learning from it that Governor Roosevelt has decided to have Mrs. Martha Place electrocuted, I should advise the Governor to have Mrs. Augusta Neck, the murderer, placed in the condemned woman in the chair and strap her there, as she is quite used to such a thing as murder.

I really do not think the man, if it can find one that will prepare the woman for the shock, will ever be able to rest again, even if he did commit the crime.

THEODORE CHESTON.

Blue Jean's Company.

As Seen by a Southerner.

To the Editor of the Journal:

I have taken a very great interest in your splendid but hitherto unsuccessful effort to have Mrs. Place released. I have read your editorial, and I am sure that you are a man of noble and noble spirit. I am sure that you are a man of noble and noble spirit.

The sun which shines so brightly to-day must only add to her punishment and remorse. No man but her God will ever know what dreadful thoughts torture her as she sees her life almost ended. Every hour but adds renewed terror to her already unbalanced mind, and when the day of her execution arrives, unless God in his mercy see fit to relieve her of her sufferings soon, there will be a poor, crazy woman to satisfy stern justice.

There can be but one law for judge and people; that law was clearly sounded from the pulpit of Sinai, and it was loudly repeated in the setting up of unvarying distinctions. "Thou shalt not kill." Who, shall not kill, does this mean? The individual or the authorities? The judge or the people? Martha Place, the murderer, who shall die, and to execute an insane woman would be a crime as great as the crime of the murderer.

There is still a chance to save her. Let us unite in one great effort and pray Governor Roosevelt to commute the sentence or at least grant her a reprieve, belong to no church, but I earnestly pray that you may succeed in your noble undertaking.

Yours truly, MALCOLM STUART DOUGLAS.

Torture Unwarranted.

To the Editor of the Journal:

The statement in the Evening Journal that Martha Place requested women attendants at the prospective execution suggests an idea. If the State is to have the moral law as a convict more punishment than the law prescribes, it should claim his pound of flesh, but the law gave him no right of blood.

Granted the average degree of modesty to Mrs. Place. It is evident that the proposed method of execution is a cruel and unnecessary one. It is a cruel and unnecessary one. It is a cruel and unnecessary one.

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could insist upon female attendants exclusively or commutation of sentence.

WILL BLYTHE.

Waldmann's Opera House, Newark, N. J.

Not a Criminal at Heart.

To the Editor of the Journal:

Permit me to thank you for the many admirable letters published in your paper, from the prominent and public spirited women of our country, regarding the case of Mrs. Martha Place. The words of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and of Dr. Thos. H. Harnford, in Thursday's issue of the Evening Journal, should cause us to bow our heads for shame.

The ringing axiom uttered by Mrs. Denies Denison, president of Sargent's, should be emblazoned in gold, and kept before the eyes of the people. They rise up on masses against this nineteenth century barbarism.

Having had a personal acquaintance with Mrs. Martha Place in past years, and knowing her true nature and characteristics as those of a most gentle and amiable woman, I can fully corroborate the statement of Cesare Lombroso (criminologist) that she was not a born criminal, but was a criminal at heart, but a half-crazed, morbid woman, strained to the point of desperation.

The opinions of Dr. Roxana Barnes and Dr. Emma Leach are significant—as are many others from physicians, which rob the law of all excuse in this murder.

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Victim of Wrongful Law.

To the Editor of the Journal:

Your more than anxious reading the proposed murder of Mrs. Place is a manly one. If this legal killing is allowed to proceed it will be the most horrible ever witnessed.

The execution of a man is always wicked and a crime; but if it is put to death society's wickedness, it is doubly so. We claim (men particularly) to be a nation of civilized Christians, lovers of liberty, freedom, etc.; yet we do not hesitate to subject a woman to the tender mercies of a law which has had no voice in framing or acting upon, either personally or by representation.

Certainly Mrs. Place committed a horrible crime; but if she is put to death society's wickedness, it is doubly so. We claim (men particularly) to be a nation of civilized Christians, lovers of liberty, freedom, etc.; yet we do not hesitate to subject a woman to the tender mercies of a law which has had no voice in framing or acting upon, either personally or by representation.

Let us not forget that Mrs. Place was a woman who was a victim of a wrongful law. She was a woman who was a victim of a wrongful law. She was a woman who was a victim of a wrongful law.

Letter Versus Spirit.

To the Editor of the Journal:

Feeling more than anxious on reading the Governor's decision regarding Mrs. Place, I may find some relief in submitting to the Journal the only paper, so far as I know, that has pleaded earnestly for the right in the matter. I have not read all, but this I want to see:

Here is a poor woman whom a man married because he wanted a good housekeeper and some one to care for his child.

Then the trying question of household finances must be made to vex the soul of this good housekeeper. (Numbers) arise at this moment know all that means.)

The daughter reached that perilous period of life when "wildfires" but mildly expressed the disposition manifested by many children and which tries beyond endurance many loving and patient parents. If we were to make the father's partiality.

Then there were the slights of the husband's relatives; there were the almost unendurable headaches confining the mind; there was the brooding temperament of the home-staying woman of which scarcely any man—and especially a man of Governor Roosevelt's intense activity—could have any comprehension. Acute insanity at her age is probable.

And this death to be directed and controlled by men? It is a cruel and unnecessary one. It is a cruel and unnecessary one. It is a cruel and unnecessary one.

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# THE STORY OF MRS. PLACE'S CAREER.

Her Married Life One Unending Day of Joyless Dissension—She Strangled Her Stepdaughter in a Fit of Jealous Rage—Her Appeals for Mercy.

Mrs. Place, the sentence of this Court is that the Sheriff deliver you to the authorities at Sing Sing within the period of ten days, and that there in the week beginning on August 20, 1898, you be put to death by the manner prescribed by law.

Judge Hurd, gray as death, his voice quivering with emotion, passed this sentence upon Mrs. Martha A. Place, in his court in Brooklyn, on July 17 last. The woman is to be put in the death chair this week.

From her crime alone one would judge Mrs. Place to be a fiend without one redeeming point in her character. The murder for which she was tried was a butchery of the crudest kind. She lived unhappily with her second husband, at No. 508 Hancock street, Brooklyn, and on February 7, 1898, after he had quarrelled with her over money matters and left the house, she smothered her stepdaughter, Ida Mildred Place, the beautiful girl of nineteen, after throwing acid in her face to disfigure her.

Then she packed up her belongings preparatory to leaving Brooklyn, and awaited for her husband. When he returned she attacked him with an axe, nearly killing him. He ran into the street, and was saved; she was arrested, and the defence of insanity being rejected by the jury, she was convicted. The Court of Appeals refused her a new trial, and the Governor declined to commute the sentence, and this must now be carried out.

**Trouble at Home.** Those who have met Mrs. Place speak of her as a woman of kindly instincts originally, that were warped by domestic unhappiness. She said that she was treated unkindly by her husband, who favored his daughter in everything. The position of a stepmother is at best a trying one, and Mrs. Place considered herself a very much injured, misunderstood person in the Place household.

The condemned woman is forty-five years old. She was born in New Brunswick, and when she was twenty years of age she went to work as a dressmaker. She married and had one son. He is now a youth in his teens, and one of the saddest things connected with the case is that this boy must bear the stigma of his mother's infamy.

She came to Brooklyn in 1883 to take the place of a friend who was Mr. Place's housekeeper. She was a very good woman and her good qualities as a housekeeper commended her to William H. Place, who is now forty-nine years of age and was a very good man. She was a very good woman and her good qualities as a housekeeper commended her to William H. Place, who is now forty-nine years of age and was a very good man.

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